

Mrs. Smart 'convinced' husband surprised thief

Authorities refuse comment on murder motive

By FRANK RICHARDSON
Derry News Staff

The wife of a Derry man shot last Tuesday in his Summerhill Condominium home said jewelry and other items were stolen from the premises sometime before she returned home at 10:15 p.m. to find her husband dead of a single gunshot wound to the head.

But police and the assistant attorney general investigating the case continue their refusal to comment on the possibility that Smart was shot after surprising a burglar in his home.

"I'm absolutely convinced

that someone was burglarizing our house and Greg just walked in," said Pamela Smart Monday.

She declined to elaborate on exactly what was stolen, however, saying police told her if she released information to the press, they would be forced to stop telling her about the progress of the investigation.

Meanwhile, police are searching for clues that might lead them to a suspect.

Derry Police detectives were situated Friday outside the Peabody Funeral Home, taking pictures of those attending Greg Smart's memorial services, at-

tended by nearly 300 friends and relatives. Derry Police Capt. Loring Jackson said it was part of standard procedure for a homicide investigation. He refused to comment on the progress of the investigation.

Pamela Smart said she woke up each of the past six mornings and immediately called the police to ask about their latest findings. The police, she said, have more than one theory about what happened to her husband, an insurance salesman, after he came home from late appointments that night.

"They haven't even sat down with everything yet," said Smart about the information gathered by the police.

Since the murder, police have been interviewing friends, family, and neighbors for anything they might have heard from the apartment and other pertinent information.

Smart said she finds it hard to believe neighbors didn't hear a sound of the gun that shot her husband because the family living in the unit next to her has complained about the volume of the couple's stereo.

"I've heard their stereo before and I know they've heard mine," she said. "I know a gunshot isn't a common sound in Derry, New Hampshire, but I'd at least look out the window."

She believes neighbors did hear the shot, but are too afraid to come forward with information.

"I'm hoping there's someone CONVINCED, Page 2

'Even if they catch someone, my life won't be the same'

By FRANK RICHARDSON
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Pamela Smart woke up on what would have been the morning of her first anniversary to find it raining, unlike the year before when it was a bright, sunny day.

"That reflects all the bad things that have happened," said Smart, who found her husband shot dead in their home a week ago Tuesday night.

Smart admitted Monday was a hard day for her because it would have been her first wedding anniversary.

"I remember my wedding

day last year and it was exciting and I was looking toward our future. Now there is no future for us because there's no 'us,'" she said. "Even if they catch someone, my life will never be the same."

And that is what keeps her focusing on the positive points about what happened to her husband, as opposed to the progress of the police investigation.

"I can have happiness knowing he died happy," said Smart. "We've lived life to the fullest and now I'm glad we did."

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Derry News Bot. Greco

BEARERS lead funeral procession for murdered Derry man, Gregory Smart, down the steps of St. Thomas Aquinas Church Friday. Nearly 300 relatives and friends attended services.

Houston is held on \$2

Police say alleged 'hit' contract on mom was fo

Adam Houston, 18, was ar-

Teacher salary settlement may haunt union meeting

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teachers hired by the school district in the past two years were placed on the salary schedule at steps above veteran teachers with the same number of years of experience.

The root of the problem can be traced back three years when the last contract was signed by the Derry Education Association. That contract included substantial annual raises along the entire salary schedule. In order to avoid windfall raises, veteran teachers agreed to drop back three steps on the scale. All teachers, however, still received substantial raises.

The teachers' union filed a grievance this year when it learned new teachers hired over the past two years were placed at a step on the scale corresponding with their experience, not back three steps with veteran teachers who had taught the same number of years.

It's unclear how many new teachers were affected. Derry Education Association President Ron Dion says between two and 10 new teachers were placed on what he views as the wrong salary step. An angry veteran teacher, however, claims between 10 and 20 is more accurate.

Dion said school officials "misread" the contract when it hired the new teachers.

School Superintendent David Brown, however, disagrees any mistake was made. He said the school board never agreed to hire new teachers at the same level as Derry teachers who dropped back.

"We only agreed where people would be placed who are already in the system," said Brown last week. "I hired people at the appropriate experience level."

The inequity, said Brown, is in the eye of the beholder.

"There was no decrease in anyone's salary," he said, adding that veteran teachers who dropped back three steps still received increases of between

40 and 60 percent over the three years of the contract.

"I wish I had gotten that over that three-year period," he said.

Brown has agreed, however, that from now on new teachers would be placed at the same step as veteran teachers with the same level of experience, but those who have already been hired will not be affected. He said he agreed to make the change to avoid a future labor dispute and to maintain teacher morale.

But at least one teacher is far from pleased with the agreement and she says many more are also irate.

"That leaves a group of new hires at a step level quite a bit higher than older teachers," said the teacher, who asked that her name not be used.

The teacher is particularly angry because a suggestion to "red line" new teachers to keep them level until the veterans reached the same step was nixed by union President Dion.

"We're not about to punish them (new hires) now for something that wasn't their fault," explained Dion. "We would not be representing anybody's best interest to do that."

But the agreement to accept the status quo is seen by the disgruntled teacher as perpetuating an inequitable situation and leaves what she estimates as 60 teachers at a lower salary scale than some of their newer colleagues.

She would opt for the red-lining option, or an agreement to allow the affected veteran teachers to move up on the scale — a move that would cost the school district dearly.

"There has to be parity created," she said. "That has not happened. People who have been loyal to Derry are being slapped in the face. They're saying they're not worth the money, but new people are."

Brown, however, doubts that large numbers of teachers are angry.

"I believe it's one teacher," he said.



NO SUSPECTS have been named in murder of Gregg Smart, who was found dead in his Summerhill Condominium last week with a single, gunshot wound to the head.

Pamela Smart 'convinced' her husband surprised burglar

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who is afraid to come in and I would hope that their conscience would get to them in the end," Smart said.

But neighbors did say they heard Pamela Smart come out of her house screaming for help after she found her husband.

"We didn't hear a shot, we didn't even hear the dog bark," said Harvey Woodside, a neighbor living diagonally across from the Smarts.

Derry Police Detective Dan Pelletier said people living in the area of the scene of the crime should keep a watch for strangers.

"I would certainly keep a watch if I lived here," said Pelletier.

Born in Nashua and a graduate of Londonderry High

School, Greg Smart was an account representative for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in Nashua. He had recently won the "rookie of the year" award, which was accompanied by a trip to Florida the couple had yet to take.

With police keeping tight-lipped about the investigation, rumors around town have questioned if Smart was involved with drugs, something his family and friends emphatically deny.

"He wasn't involved with drugs," offered Tom Parilla, a good friend of Smart's from high school.

Parilla said he felt it necessary to make a defense statement on behalf of his late friend because of the questions people asked him about Smart's background.

'Life won't be the same,' —

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Smart refers to their two cars, no financial problems, a nice home that she will again sleep in as things represent how fully they live. She believes her late husband had the most influence on her and plans to live the rest of her life to the fullest.

Gregg Smart, 24, had been shot in the head and found dead at about 10:15 p.m. Tuesday. Police have yet to publicly name any suspects.

Although Smart believed her husband intruded on a burglary in progress at their Summerhill Condominium home and was shot by a man he could not possibly identify, police have yet to confirm any accusations.

Smart sat at her parents' Windham home Monday, dressed in jeans and a sweatshirt. A calm and composed woman, 22, she said she was holding back because that is what her husband would have wanted.

"He would have said the world's not always fair and strong about whatever you're dealt," she said calmly.

But her husband, she said, had no enemies. If he did, names would be first out of her mouth to the police, she said.

"I knew quite a few people who would have said he was their best friend," she said who spoke calmly.

Addressing her own composure, Smart said she was easy for her because she was straight from the heart. She said she doesn't have to think about how she feels — "it's just so true."

Part of an effort to channel her energy into a positive direction comes in the form of setting up a memorial fund in Smart's name. As media attention grows, the director of school administration at 21 in Hampton, Pamela Smart will be teaching a media class at Winnacunnet High School next year. She attended a board meeting which resolved the funding of her course.

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